

SUPPORT FOR M. GILBERT RANSON'S PROPOSAL RELATING TO THE GENERIC NAME "GRYPHAEA" LAMARCK, 1819 (CLASS PELECYPODA)

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I understand that the question of the retention of the generic name *Gryphaea* for the Portuguese oyster and its nearest living relatives is now under consideration. I should like to add my name to those asking for its retention.

I am not concerned with the systematic arguments, which no doubt will be presented in full by Dr. Gilbert Ranson and others, but with practical considerations. As you know, it is only comparatively recently that the propriety of dividing the oviparous oysters from the larviparous oysters has been generally accepted, following the work of T. C. Nelson and others. To the well-marked differences in anatomy and mode of reproduction, we (Cole and Knight-Jones, 1949, *Fish. Invest.* (2) 17 (No. 3) have added differences in the behaviour of the larvae at setting.

Throughout the period when oysters were, for the most part, grouped loosely together in the genus *Ostrea*, the identity of the Portuguese oyster was maintained by Continental workers under the name *Gryphaea angulata*. To adopt *Crassostrea* now would be to create fresh confusion. Already we have Australian and New Zealand workers referring their common commercial species to the genus *Saxostrea*, although they are clearly very closely related indeed to the Portuguese species. This confusion is, I believe, typical of what would follow if the name *Crassostrea* was adopted.

The division of oviparous from larviparous oysters has assisted materially in dispersing the confusion reigning regarding their physiological and environmental requirements. In consequence it has been appreciated that cultivation methods applicable to oysters of the genus *Gryphaea* may not be equally applicable to larviparous species. As a result many ill-designed attempts to apply American methods to the cultivation of flat oysters (genus *Ostrea*) in Europe, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, or North European methods to the cultivation of tropical oysters (genus *Gryphaea*) have been reconsidered.

In contrast, the methods developed by the French for the cultivation of *Gryphaea angulata* are being applied with very striking results in West and East Africa and in the Indian Ocean. To maintain the identity of the Portuguese oyster, and to establish the close relationship of the tropical oviparous oysters to it by grouping them under the same genus, cannot but assist in the development of oyster culture in these areas.

As I mentioned earlier, I am concerned with practical considerations as I feel that systematics should be the servant of applied biology. To conserve the name *Gryphaea* would undoubtedly be of great value to oyster biologists. I write as a worker for twenty years in this field.

